



*A Community Services Block Grant Program News Forum*

Happy New Year!

We flew through another year and welcomed some significant beginnings for many of our friends, partners and colleagues. There were goodbyes and “see you later” for some and major transitions for others. It is amazing to witness these changes, challenges, and transformations together and continue to work for the well-being of our communities, agencies, families, and individuals we know. We treasure each of you and hope to continue building relationships that contribute to the well-being of Tennesseans. Be blessed and continue to be a blessing!

Warmest Regards,  
Your CSBG Team

## Content in This Newsletter | January 2024

- [Agency Wins](#)
  - Feeding the Need: From People to Pets
  - Bridging the Digital Gap
  - A Strong Representation at the TFA Conference
- [The Best Play Book](#)
  - Connecting with Customers and Partners During NDEAM
- [Happenings in Tennessee](#)
  - An Increase in SNAP Eligibility Calls
  - Events from the TDHS
  - TEMA Trainings
  - Tennessee Parks and Tourism Events
- [Ask the Community](#)
- [About Community Impact in Action](#)
  - Submit a "Best Play"

---

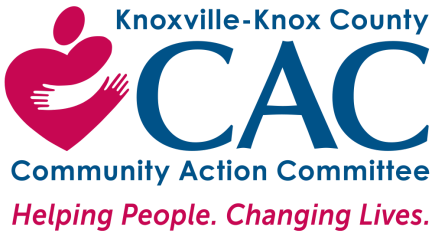
## Agency Wins

*Innovative programs, services, achievements, community awards, and accomplishments from agencies across the state*

### Feeding the Need: From People to Pets

The Feed-a-Pet program at Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (KKCCAC) began in 2001 as a response to reports from Mobile Meals volunteers that some of their program participants struggled to afford pet food and were sharing their food with their pets. Barbara Monty, who was KKCCAC's Office on Aging Director at the time, realized that this represented an unmet need in our community, and the Feed-a-Pet program was born. It has grown over the ensuing decades, having a great and positive impact for many older Knox County residents and their pets. Feed-a-Pet currently serves 113 low-income individuals over the age of 60 who, collectively, own 169 pets.

Feed-a-Pet delivers approximately 3,800 pounds of pet food each month to program participants, and each participant receives a full months' worth of pet food for all of their pets enrolled in the program. The food is collected from local veterinarians, local shelters, and through community donations and is delivered to program participants with help from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine and volunteers. Participants' pets are required to be spayed or neutered and must stay current on basic core vaccines. Information and referral support to affordable resources is provided. When funds are available, Feed-a-Pet also assists with veterinary services and grooming services as well as provides some pet supplies.



Feed-a-Pet Program Manager Monica Brown with Lowe's Representative Nicholas Shelton, at doors to storage shed.



12/01/2023 Ribbon Cutting with CAC Board Members and Management, and Lowe's Representative Nicholas Shelton.



Feed-a-Pet logo on side of storage shed.

Due to the growth of the program, a larger storage area was needed for the pet food. Thanks to Backyard Products and Lowes #637, located at 6600 Clinton Highway in Knoxville, the Feed-a-Pet program now has a large 12'x8' shed for pet food storage that allows the program to continue to grow and support more older residents and their pets in Knoxville/Knox County.

Want to learn more

Visit [knoxcac.org](http://knoxcac.org)

Contact Office on Aging Director Dottie Lyvers by email at [Dottie.Lyvers@Knoxseniors.Org](mailto:Dottie.Lyvers@Knoxseniors.Org) or phone at 865-546-3500

---

# Bridging the Digital Gap: Tech Smart Knox Seniors Honored with Aging Innovation Award

Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee's Office on Aging garnered acclaim in November 2023, at the Tennessee Federation for the Aging (TFA) Conference in Gatlinburg, TN, where they proudly accepted the Aging Innovation award for their groundbreaking program, Tech Smart Knox Seniors. This visionary initiative, funded by a generous grant from the West End Home Foundation, has made significant strides in bridging the digital divide among older adults in Knox County. Tech Smart Knox Seniors focuses on empowering seniors through comprehensive digital training, providing them with essential tools, and ensuring they have the necessary support to navigate the online world.

To date, the program has successfully trained and equipped 550 older adults with 15 hours of digital literacy training. The participants not only gain crucial digital skills but also receive their very own affordable laptop, facilitating their continued engagement with technology. Recognizing the importance of connectivity, Tech Smart Knox Seniors goes a step further by offering in-home internet counseling, ensuring that seniors can confidently and securely access online resources from the comfort of their homes.

Classes are facilitated by dedicated and trained volunteers, enhancing the learning experience for participants. An invaluable partnership with Tech Goes Home has played a pivotal role in the program's success, ensuring seniors receive top-notch training and support.



Left to Right: TFA Representative Cassandra Miller and CAC Representatives Desha Finley, Dottie Lyvers, Dylan Scott



Instructor Dylan Scott

The Aging Innovation award is a testament to the impactful work carried out by the CAC Office on Aging. The recognition was accepted by the dedicated team behind Tech Smart Knox Seniors: Office on Aging Director Dottie Lyvers, Associate Director of Volunteer Management Deisha Finley, and Digital Literacy Coordinator Dylan Scott. This recognition highlights the program's commitment to enhancing the lives of older adults by embracing innovative solutions and fostering inclusivity in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Through initiatives like Tech Smart Knox Seniors, communities are not only addressing the immediate challenges posed by the digital divide but are also paving the way for a more connected and empowered aging population. The Aging Innovation award serves as both acknowledgment and inspiration, propelling organizations like the CAC Office on Aging to continue their transformative work in the service of seniors.

#### Want to learn more?

Visit [knoxcac.org](https://knoxcac.org)

Contact Office on Aging Director Dottie Lyvers by email at [Dottie.Lyvers@Knoxseniors.Org](mailto:Dottie.Lyvers@Knoxseniors.Org) or phone at 865-546-3500

---

## UC Well-Represented at TFA Conference, Warren Co. Executive Named Middle TN Aging Champion

The Upper Cumberland was well-represented during the recent Tennessee Federation for the Aging (TFA) Conference in Gatlinburg. The 2023 installment featured the theme *Taking Aging to Higher Elevations* and saw a record 336 individuals in attendance.

In addition to the excellent keynote and breakout sessions, TFA recognized Warren County Executive Terry Bell with the Middle Tennessee Elected Official Aging Champion Award. Co-workers and friends of the aging network from across the state were also recognized during the first *In Memoriam Tribute* and nearly \$3,000 was raised for scholarships in the silent auction fundraiser.

*Congratulations to Jessica Roberson, AAAD I&A Specialist and TFA Conference Committee Chair, on a very successful event!*

**Want to learn more?**

Contact Jordan Herald by e-mail [jherald@uchra.com](mailto:jherald@uchra.com) or phone 931-528-1127.



TFA recognized Warren County Executive Terry Bell with the Middle Tennessee Elected Official Aging Champion Award



Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency Team

**Submit Your Agency's Win**

*Has your agency broken new ground, increased services, achieved a milestone, or created an innovative experience? Our "Agency Wins" column spotlights innovative programs, services, achievements, community awards, and accomplishments from agencies across the state. If there's an activity or agency accomplishment you're proud of, we want to hear from you. Your story can inspire others.*

[Submit Your Agency Win](#)

**The Best Play Book**

**Connecting with Customers and Partners During National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Every October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) recognizes the contributions of workers with disabilities in America, showcasing inclusive employment policies that benefit both employers and employees. This year, in recognition and support of NDEAM, the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) joined the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) and other local community partners in attending a local hiring

event. During this event, UCHRA representatives were able to talk with individuals interested in applying for various positions with the agency. Interested applicants were able to complete applications on-site during the event. Hiring events similar to the one recently attended by UCHRA are part of a statewide effort by TDHS to increase awareness of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and promote job readiness for Tennesseans with disabilities. Additionally, UCHRA was able to further assist event attendees through the use of the agency's public transportation services; providing transportation to individuals interested in attending the hiring event.



## Tell Us Your Best Plays!

*We want to know what the best practices are for your agency's service delivery/administration or if there is advice you'd like to share with others as they work to serve communities in our state.*

[Share a Best Play](#)

## Happenings in Tennessee

### An Update on SNAP Processing and Interview Calls

TDHS has been diligently working to manage processing times for SNAP applications. In our relentless efforts to address the challenges head-on, we'd like to share an important and timely update with you. Last week we began a concentrated effort to conduct federally mandated SNAP interviews, and reached out to approximately 35,000 applicants. We are continuing to make calls to customers and request your help in spreading the word to customers so that they do not miss their call.



Please note that the department will call from any of the following phone numbers: 866-311-4287, 615-984-0902, or 615-532-0762. Staff will make at least two attempts to reach the customer for the scheduled interview.

Here are three steps that can help Tennesseans prepare for the SNAP Phone Interview:

- Make sure contact information is correct via the One DHS Customer Portal (Log in at OneDhs.TN.Gov).
- Submit verification documents as soon as possible on the [One DHS Customer Portal](#).
- Keep phone nearby.

Tips to Prepare Customers for SNAP Interviews

1. Make sure contact information is correct on the One DHS Customer Portal when you log in at OneDhs.TN.Gov.

2. Submit or upload the required verification documents as soon as possible.

3. Keep the phone near

TN

Department of Human Services

Have questions about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application process or the verification documents required to receive SNAP? Find answer on the TDHS website.

TN.Gov/HumanServices/For-Families/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-SNAP.html

More information on verification documents, interview and the process required to receive SNAP, can be found on the TDHS website at [TN.Gov/HumanServices/For-Families/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-Snap/Applying-for-Services.html](#).

Updates will also be shared on TDHS social media accounts. We appreciate your help in getting the word out!

## Upcoming Events from TDHS

[Click Here to learn about upcoming events for Tennesseans and advocates](#)

Hamilton County

2024 Computer Literacy Workshops

A beginner-friendly learning space for Tennesseans with disabilities and community members.

TN

Department of Human Services

A Division of Rehabilitation Services Event

TN.Gov/HumanServices/Disability-Services.html

Parents & Partners Connect

A Virtual Question and Answer Session with Tennessee Child Support Professionals

TN

Department of Human Services

Let's Talk Transition in the 901

An opportunity for students with disabilities and their advocates to discuss the opportunities, challenges, and practical solutions to make a strong transition from student to adult life and work.

TN

Department of Human Services

A Division of Rehabilitation Services Event

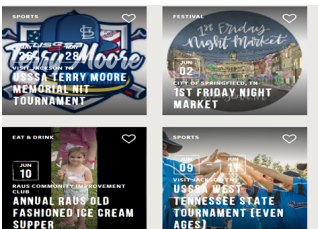
TN.Gov/HumanServices/Disability-Services.html

# Tennessee Emergency Management Trainings

[Click Here to view upcoming trainings.](#)

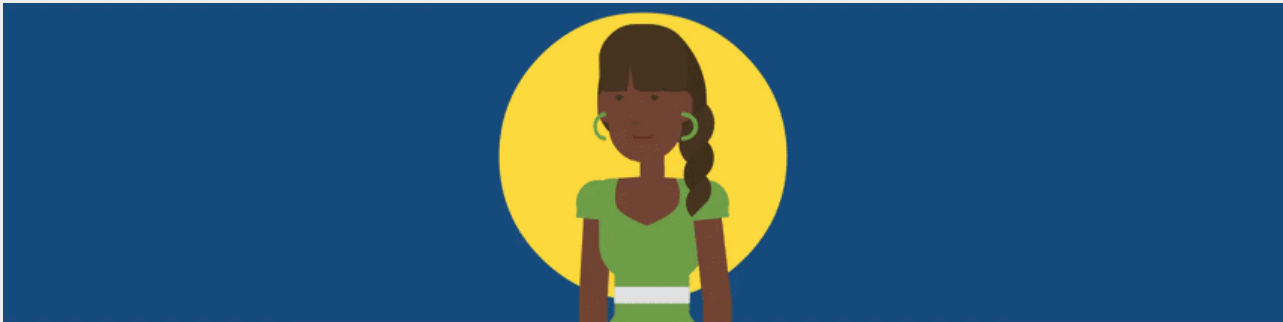


## Events from Tennessee State Parks and Department of Tourist Development



Have an upcoming happening? Please share!

Share an Upcoming Happening



## Ask the Community

Community Impact in Action is meant to not only provide answers from the TDHS CSBG Office but also act as a “crowd-sourcing” forum. This column is an opportunity for agencies to pose questions to both the CSBG team and other agencies. Agency staff members are encouraged to both ask questions and respond directly to questions from other agencies in the “Ask the Community” column.

### Have a Questions for the Community?

Have a question for the TDHS CSBG team, want to know how other CSBG members are handling a problem, or are curious about a particular topic?

Submit a Question to the CSBG Network



# About Community Impact in Action

Community Impact in Action is a quarterly e-newsletter that connects the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) network in Tennessee. The newsletter is designed to amplify agency voices across the state and increase communication and peer sharing opportunities. The CSBG network can use this newsletter as a forum to share information with each other and the Tennessee Department of Human Services CSBG team.

## Who can make a submission to Community Impact in Action?

Any agency representative can create and submit content for “Agency Wins, The Best Play Book, Ask the Community or Community Events” articles and we look forward to reading and sharing your submissions. However, we strongly recommend that agencies establish an internal approval process for submitting content to Community Impact in Action. TDHS reserves the right to edit content and a representative may contact content contributors for additional information.

## When to Make Submissions

Community Impact in Action is published on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, October) and submissions for the next newsletter should be submitted no later than the 15th day of the last month in the quarter. This is especially true for upcoming event submissions. For example, an event scheduled to take place in April, May or June should be submitted no later than March 15th. However, in some cases, events may be shared on the TDHS online event calendar or social media calendar without being shared in the newsletter. These events should be submitted no later than four weeks prior to the event.

Have questions about *Community Impact in Action* or related topics? Email the Tennessee Department of Human Services CSBG Office at [CSBG.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:CSBG.DHS@tn.gov) with the subject line "Community Impact in Action Newsletter."

For the latest news from the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Follow @TNHumanServices



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt Out](#) using TrueRemove™  
Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.  
View this email [online](#).

505 Deaderick Street, 17th Floor | Nashville, TN 37243 US

This email was sent to .  
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.